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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

INTRODUCING THE AUTHOR :

Maryam Jameelah was born in 1934 in New York at the height of the Great Depression - a fourth-generation American of German-Jewish origin. She was reared in Westchester, one of the most prosperous and populated suburbs of New York and received a thoroughly secular American education at the local public schools. Always an above-average student, she soon became a passionate intellectual and insatiable bibliophile, hardly ever without a book in hand, her readings extending far beyond the requirements of the school curriculum. As she entered adolescence, she became intensely serious-minded, scorning all frivolities, which is very rare for an otherwise attractive young girl. Her main interests were religion, philosophy, history, anthropology, sociology and biology. The school and local community public libraries and later, the New York Public Library, became "her second home."

After her graduation from secondary school in the summer of 1952, she was admitted to New York University where she studied a general liberal arts programme. While at the university, she became severely ill in 1953, grew steadily worse and had to discontinue college two years later without earning any diploma, She was confined to private and public hospitals for two ears (1957-1959) and only after her discharge, did she discover her facility for writing. Marmaduke Pickthall's translation of Quran and Allama Muhammad Asad's two books - his autobiographical *Road to Mecca* and *Islam at the Crossroads* ignited her interest in Islam and after correspondence with some prominent Muslims in Muslim lands and making intimate friends with some Muslim converts in New York, she embraced Islam at the Islamic Mission in Brooklyn, New York at the hand of Shaikh Daoud Ahmad Faisal, who then changed her name from Margaret Marcus to Maryam Jameelah.

During extensive correspondence with Muslims throughout the world and reading and making literary contributions to whatever Muslim periodicals were available in English, Maryam Jameelah became acquainted with the writings of Maulana Sayyid Abul Ala Maudoodi and so, beginning in December 1960, they exchanged letters regularly. In the spring of 1962, Maulana Maudoodi invited Maryam Jameelah to migrate to Pakistan and live as a member of his family in Lahore. Maryam Jameelah accepted the offer and a year later, married Mohammad Yusuf Khan, a whole-time worker for the Jama'at-e-Islami who later became the publisher of all her books. She subsequently became the mother of four children, living with her co-wife and her children in a large extended household of inlaws. Most unusual for a woman after marriage, she continued all her intellectual interests and literary activities; in fact, her most important writings were done during and inbetween pregnancies. She observes *Purdah* strictly.

Her hatred of atheism and materialiam in all its varied manifestations - past and present - is intense and in her restless quest for absolute, transcendental ideals, she upholds Islam as the most emotionally and intellectually satisfying explanation to the Ultimate Truth which alone gives life (and death) meaning, direction, purpose and value.

UMAR FARUQ KHAN

BADEE-U-ZAMAN SAID NURSI

If it is a precedent followed by Islamic history that great reformers appear in every age to struggle for the revival of Islam, then certainly Badee-u-Zaman Said Nursi of Turkey was such a Mujaddid presented by Allah to the Muslims to combat the evils of the notorious regime of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. Decades have passed since the death of the Dictator but the strength of Nursi's following is still growing fast. Despite all obstacles, the disciplined followers of Badee-u-Zaman are devoting their utmost to bring about an Islamic renaissance by peaceful means, working hard in literary, educational and other fields of endeavour.

Badee-u-Zaman was born in a small village in the district of Hizan in the province of Bitlis in 1873. He was a Kurd by birth and his parents traced their lineage to a grand old family. When he was nine years old, his elder brother sent him to the local school. After some years, Badee-u-Zaman left his birth-place in pursuit of higher studies and visited several centres of learning. Within a short time he had mastered the Quran, Islamic jurisprudence, oratory, philosophy, history and geography. He was gifted with an extraordinary memory and as a result, he committed by heart the Quran, the most important Arabic dictionaries and several books on Islamic law. Early in life he realized the importance and necessity of learning the natural sciences. Throughout his busy life, he kept his growing interest in the study of science. Within

a short time he had gained proficiency in Mathematics, Biology and some foreign languages as well. His amazing ability and learning were widely discussed in the newspapers and magazines. Regular reading of the newspapers in the morning indicated his interest in politics.

He led a very simple, honest and self-restrained life. Whenever he was in doubt in any case, he refrained from the act in accordance with the instruction of the Holy Prophet; "If you are in doubt about anything, then give it up and replace it with that in which there is no doubt." Thus at every stage of his life when he found himself in any predicament, he was guided either by the verses of the Quran or the sayings of the Prophet. He refrained from taking food when he was doubtful about it and satisfied himself by eating vegetables and even grass. It was customary with him to give a part of his food to the ants. When asked about it, he replied; "This is my tribute to the democratic spirit and the wonderful organization of these small creatures."

One day his attention was drawn to the statement of the British Minister for Colonies who said; "As long as the Quran is with the Muslims, they will be in our way. Hence we must remove it from their life." With righteous indignation, Badee-u-Zaman declared to his comrades; "In the name of Allah I will devote myself to the cause of the Quran at the stake of my life whatever might be the sacreligious designs of the British Minister!" With this declaration, he moved to Istanbul and made arrangements to establish the Zuhra University on the model of the Jamia al-Azhar in Cairo. By a happy coincidence the

Rector of al-Azhar happened to visit Istanbul at that time so that they had many an opportunity to meet and hold long discussions on Islamic affairs.

After Sultan Abdul Hamid II was overthrown by the Young Turks in 1908, Badee-u-Zaman encountered a political organization known as the Committee of Union and Progress. Although it advertised itself as a religious organization, it was really controlled by the Freemasons. Immediately responding to this challenge, Badee-u-Zaman initiated a counter move by organizing a rival party under the name of the Ittihad-i-Muhammadi with the same slogans of unity, freedom and reform but with this difference that its policies, programme and objectives conformed to the ideology and law of Islam. He wrote essays in furtherance of the aims of his organization. Again and again he exhorted the people not to abandon the path ordained by the Quran. He warned them that the alternative to the Quranic way of life would be the acceptance of the West in which case they would remain as Turks in name only.

The leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress could not tolerate this activity and consequently arrested Badee-u-Zaman in March 1909. Nineteen of his comrades were executed. The same court which sentenced the nineteen to the guillotine was also to try Badee-u-Zaman. After passing the death sentence upon another fifteen of his followers, Judge Khurshid Pasha turned towards Badee-u-Zaman and asked ; "Do you also want the implementation of the Islamic laws?" Badee-u-Zaman replied, "If I were endowed with a thousand lives, I would gladly sacrifice

them all for the cause of Islam. Anything foreign to Islam is not acceptable to me. Actually I am waiting at the Barzakh (the condition between death and resurrection) for the coach that will take me to the Hereafter. I am ready for the journey to the other world to join my comrades who have escaped from your tyranny through the gallows. I am eager and impatient to see the Hereafter. Just imagine the state of mind of a rustic villager who has all along been hearing about the comfort, luxury and magnificence of the city of Istanbul and could not see it, then you have an idea of my impatience to reach the Hereafter. I am accused of sharply criticizing the freethinkers and their hirling journalists. Even now I say that just as the garments of a delinquent do not suit a respectable gentleman, so also the culture and way of life of Europe do not suit the people of Istanbul. Glory to Allah and victory to Islam!"

Badee-u-Zaman was tried and because of loud popular protest, in the end the martial court acquitted him.

After a short stay in Istanbul, he went to Damascus where before the most learned ulema there, he delivered a stirring address in the Umayyad Mosque where he diagnosed the ills of the modern world in general and the Muslim world in particular :

1. the prevelance of dispair
2. the lack of honesty in social and political matters
3. the substitution of enmity for amity
4. disunity among the Muslims
5. the growth of totalitarian tyranny
6. egotism

He pleaded for Arab-Turkish unity as the basis upon which an Islamic renaissance depends and promised in the future that if the Muslims strived to their utmost, Islamic civilization would replace European culture for the latter was corrupted with the lowest passions and mutual discord and devoid of Divine guidance.

After his journey to Damascus, he devoted his time to the founding of a new Islamic University where the religious teachings of Islam would be combined with the modern sciences, but World War I interrupted this activity.

When the first World War broke out, he joined the Turkish army and due to his outstanding bravery, quickly rose to the position of an officer. At his camp he used to deliver lectures to his friends and followers on the various aspects of the Quran. Hundreds of men used to surround the camp to hear him. Once after nearly all the men in his battalion had been slain, along with three or four comrades, he broke three lines of enemy soldiers and hid in a canal where they stood for 33 hours with rifles in hand despite one of his legs having been broken. Finally he was captured by the Russians.

One day the Russian General Nicholas visited the prisoner of war camp and at once all the prisoners jumped to jumped to their feet and saluted him except Badee-u-Zaman. When the General asked him if he knew who he was, Badee-u-Zaman replied: "Yes, I know you are Nicholas Nikolavich. That is not the point. I am a Muslim. I consider the Muslim superior to a non-believer. I worship only God. I cannot revere you."

At once he was sued by the Martial Court and when

awarded the death-sentence, he requested only to be allowed to perform two rakats of Salat and then be shot. Some of his friends begged him to go and ask pardon from the General but he only replied; "Perhaps this sentence may be a passport for me to travel into eternal Paradise."

At last the Russian commander came to him to beg his pardon, "Please forgive me," he pleaded. "Because of the sincerety of your faith and your courage, your death sentence is hereby annulled."

After two and a half years of captivity in Siberia, he made his escape to Istanbul through Petersburg, Warasw and Vienna where he was wildly welcomed by both the ulema and the common people. In 1920 on the successful culmination of the Turkish revolution, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk invited Badee-u-Zaman to attend the celebration of Independence Day at Ankara. Badee-u-Zaman went to Ankara and to his dismay, found no trace of Islamic faith or practice in Mustafa Kemal. Consequently, he left Ankara without attending the celebrations but sent a statement containing ten points to the Parliament which was presided over by Kemal Pasha. The statement commenced as follows :

"Oh ye members of Parliament ! Remember the Day when you must present yourselves before Allah, the Lord of the Day of Judgement ! Do not ruin the good gained by your defeat of the foreign powers from without by wickedness from within. If you prefer to imitate the Europeans and un-Islamic ways, the peoples of the Muslim world will look to others for help."

The statement was read in the Parliament by Kazim Pasha. It had a miraculous effect on the members of whom no less than one hundred and sixty at once took the vow to lead an Islamic life and offer their five daily *Salat* regularly. All this frustrated Mustafa Kemal who sent for him and said ; "We are proud of you as our leader but, unfortunately, you have at the very beginning created dissension by stressing the importance of prayer." Badee-u-Zaman sternly rebuked him. "Pasha ! *Salat* is the first sign through which a Muslim is recognized and that you refuse. He who rejects *Salat* is a rebel against Allah and hence your rule cannot be accepted."

Mustafa Kemal thought the best way to appease him was to appoint him as head-preacher of Anatolia province and an executive member of Dar-ul-Hikmat University. A palatial building was offered for his residence but Badee-u-Zaman refused everything and fled Ankara, living a life of seclusion near Van. Here he gathered the young men of the neighbourhood and taught them the Quran. He explained first the literal meaning and then its deeper significance and implications. Thus he placed before them the beauty of the verses, laying special stress on their spiritual, physical and mental significance in reference to the present life and the life Hereafter. He vividly explained to them the secrets of nature and the various powers within the grasp of human beings which they could enjoy provided they lived a natural, honest and simple life in conformity to the Quran and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet.

Soon the Government arrested him and his followers and sent them to jail. For eight years Badee-u-Zaman was

exiled and kept in a well-guarded jail in virtual solitary confinement where he cooked his food and washed his clothes. In the course of time, the jail guards also became his disciples. Here in Barla he started writing his Risala-i-Noor Quranic commentaries. Those who received them copied these tracts by hand and contributed to their wider circulation. As a result, thousands of hand-written pamphlets found their way to villages, towns, cities, schools, colleges and government offices. Of these lonely years, Badee-u-Zaman said, "Through these sufferings of exile, imprisonment and solitary confinement, I was mercifully directed to meditate only on the truth of the Quran in a state of grace."

After his sentence in Barla, he left for Isparta and lived there alone for some time until he was arrested along with 120 of his disciples and tried at Eskisehir Criminal Court. The charge was conspiracy to overthrow the Government:

"My argument is that the possibility of any movement being successful does not mean that the movement has actually succeeded or that the Government has been overthrown. For example, there is every possibility of a match-stick burning a house but unless the house is set afire, I cannot be charged for arson. To speak the truth, I do not want to take the Government in my hands but to guide the people in Allah's path. We are not followers of any mere sect but the followers of Truth. Our leader is the Quran, our Guide is the Holy Prophet and our law is the sacred Shariah. We have no organization nor are we engaged in any political activity. Our Risala-i-Noor is a school of belief and faith. This school has no buildings, no-

programme, no organization, no funds, no administrators, no employers nor employees. It is an organization only of the heart. Its text-book is the Quran and collections of Risala-i-Noor commentaries upon it. Every faithful believer is a member of this school which has no limitations time or place. According to the estimate of the public prosecutor, in 1947 at least 500,000-600,000 pupils are regular readers of the Risala-i-Noor throughout Anatolia. All of them - workers, students, teachers and Government servants- are diligently engaged in their daily tasks. Not one of them has ever been guilty of participating in any public disorder. None of them have ever violated the law of the land. How then is it possible for such a school, established on the hearts so many of the Turkish people, ever to be closed down? You say that what I do is not sanctioned by the Government; that there is a department for such work and that I should obtain a license from the Government for the same. To take out a license to obey God? Could you stop death by closing down the grave-yards for eternity? You abuse me for not having worn a European hat and then removed it to pay respects to the honourable court. Remember that only a very few have donned it willingly but millions have been compelled to wear it under coercion. Is it not disgraceful that the Freemasons should be allowed to denounce Islam and encourage drinking, gambling, and adultery as part of the official campaign to popularize European culture while I and my comrades should be debarred from spreading the message of the Quran and serving the cause of Allah? I am labelled as a rebel against Democracy while I have been its champion

from my very boyhood. I give part of my food to the ants out of my admiration for their democratic organization. I am also charged for being a *Sufi*. A man can enter Paradise without being a *Sufi* but no man can attain it without possessing faith in God and obedience to his laws. Since twenty years, three governments, two courts and even Mustafa Kemal himself could not discover any fault in my career, let alone the charge that I am an enemy of the State. Therefore I may be permitted to continue my mission peacefully."

Again some years later, he was tried in the High Court of Afyon for the same charge of conspiring against the state which was found baseless by the court of law earlier.

"Does anybody suppose that I am working for selfesh purposes ? Here I am almost ninety years old with one foot in the grave ! I have no money and I own no property. What could I know of mundane pleasures, having lived all my life on battlefields, in prisoner-of-war camps, in exile, spending my time in jails being tried by one court after the other. Exiled from one city to another like a vagabond and forbidden the normal contacts of family and friends, were I not a Muslim firm in faith, surely I would have preferred death to such a life ! Thirty years ago when I was a member of Dar ul Hikmat, my friend, Syed Saduddin Pasha, told me that the Committee of Union and Progress had decided to execute me because Turkey will not turn to atheism so long as I lived and I replied ; "The predestined moment of my death is fixed by God and is unchangeable."

"In the last 30-40 years every kind of conspiracy against me has been tried to get rid of me. During my imprison-

ment, no less than 19 attempts have been made to poison me. And they tried to enrage me through constant provocative surveillance but suddenly God enlightened my heart that instead of growing angry, I should pity my oppressors, who will in the very near future be subjected to eternal torture in Hell one thousand times worse than mine on earth and then my revenge would be satisfied. Even while they live, many of them will suffer by their pangs of conscience and dread of death so now I take pity on them and say, 'May Allah improve them.' By writing Risala-i-Noor, I have saved more than a half million Turks from suffering the torments of eternal punishment in the Hereafter, therefore may a thousand thanks be for Allah, the Omnipotent ! I thus sacrificed myself for the belief of my people. I am neither fond of Paradise nor do I fear Hell. If the Quran had no followers on earth, I would suffer torments of misery even in Paradise while if I could only see the faith of Turkey in security, I would feel joy while my body was burnt in Hell !"

It is a well-known precedent of law that a man should never be condemned for the same offence twice. Hence some of the judges and many of the lawyers doubted if the case were valid. It is an irony that despite the severe security measures, the very judges who tried him eventually became his admirers and supported his mission but the unjust secular regime of the Kemalists who like all totalitarian dictatorships cannot tolerate loyalty to God first and foremost in disregard to their programme and everything it stands for, only wanted to deprive Badee-u-Zaman of his freedom and the propagation of his movement. At last the

case was referred to an appellate bench which kept it pending for twenty months. All this while the aged *Mujaddid* was rotting in the jail at Isparta.

Only two months prior to his death, through special permission, he went to Ankara and then on to Istanbul where he was honoured by the people with a most enthusiastic welcome and granted a favourable press, despite the publication of his picture wearing a turban, but soon afterwards, the Masons and leftist elements turned savagely on him and he was again imprisoned.

In the middle of Ramadan, he suddenly fell gravely ill and requested two of his disciples to take him secretly to Urfa where on Ramadan 27, 1379 he died at the advanced age of 86. Thus after a lifetime of exile and imprisonment in the service of the Islamic cause, Badee-u-Zaman's life ended in fulfilment of the verse from the Quran :

Oh ye who believe ! Be mindful of your duty to Allah and seek the way of approach unto Him and strive in His way in order that ye may succeed. (V : 35)

MUSLIMS AWAKE!

While the evils of atheism and materialism, supported by all the forces of modern technology, are working day and night to destroy us—spiritually, culturally and politically—rather than hold fast to faith in Allah, unite and combat our real enemies, we foolishly choose to tread the path of an alien civilization, hoping thereby in vain to attain social prestige and the comforts and pleasures of this transitory world in utter forgetfulness of the eternal Life Hereafter and thus totally neglect our duties as Muslims to Allah and our fellow-beings. This is not the way to "Progress" but can only result in our failure, degeneration and doom, both individually and collectively! Muslim brothers and sisters! Follow the path of the Quran and Sunnah, not as a set of dead rituals but as a practical manual of guidance for our conduct in daily life in private and in public, put aside sectarian and political controversies and let us all cooperate and work together in harmony for the cause of Allah in Islamic movements in whichever country you happen to live, do not waste valuable time in useless things and *inshallah*, Allah shall crown your life with great achievements here and supreme success in the Hereafter.

MARYAM JAMEELAH